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ABSTRACT

In reaction to objections from various minority groups in Minnesota regarding the way they were portrayed and treated in the public schools, the state adopted Education 521, the Human Relations Component, in all programs leading to either initial certification or recertification in education. It was the task of this study to determine the effects of human relations training on teachers participating in such a class. A questionnaire was given to participants at the final meeting. The results indicated that the participants felt that the topics were appropriate to their needs; a majority felt that role playing and simulation games were helpful for understanding other people's feelings. Other questions on the questionnaire asked about the improvement of the participants' knowledge of minority groups (including young people, senior citizens, and women) and about increased sensitivity to their colleagues and students. Specific results are included in the tables in the text. The conclusions see the course experience as bringing some increased flexibility, increased awareness of behavior that needs changing, and increased sensitivity to colleagues and students. (JA)

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Some Preliminary Observations Regarding the Minnesota State Human Relations Requirement and Its Effect on In-Service Teachers

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Introduction

In early 1969 representatives of various minority groups in Minnesota began to express their increasing concern, both publically and privately, regarding the way in which they were portrayed and treated in the public schools. It was their feeling teachers should be aware of the life styles and sensitive to the problems faced by those who may be culturally different from themselves.

On December 15, 1969 the State Board of Education, in response to the concerns being raised and upon motion of Mrs. Mary Jo Richardson, passed a resolution requesting the creation of "a task force to consider the need for human relations training in the preparation of professional personnel in education." Following its creation by the State Board of Education, the Human Relations Task Force first met on December 23, 1969 and was chaired by Dr. Stanley J. Idzerda, President of the College of St. Benedict. This group continued to meet over a period of several months and developed a position paper on the regulation of certification as it concerned human relations training. This position paper was approved by the State Advisory Committee on Teacher Education on September 14, 1970.

By February 16, 1971 the State Board of Education had adopted Education 521, the Human Relations component, in all programs leading to either initial certification or recertification in education. The effective date of this regulation as established by the Board was July 1, 1973.

The Regulation

In summary form, Education 521, the Human Relations certification requirement, states both practicing and prospective teachers must demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Understand the contributions and life styles of the various racial, cultural, and economic groups in our society.
2. Recognize and deal with dehumanizing biases, discrimination, and prejudices.
3. Create learning environments which contribute to the self-esteem of all persons and to positive interpersonal relations.
4. Demonstrate that they respect human diversity and personal rights.

Problem

Our task was to attempt to determine the effects of human relations training upon the participants. In light of the Human Relations certification requirement, the following questions were raised to focus the analyses of the data:

1. What will be the effect of this experience on the attitudes of the participants toward various racial, cultural, and economic groups in our society?
2. Will the participants recognize and identify ways to deal with dehumanizing biases, discrimination, and prejudices?
3. Which of the various learning experiences included in the class will produce positive reactions in the participants?

Procedures

During the Summer of 1972, the Curriculum Director of a school district in the Moorhead State College service area approached one of the authors and inquired about the possibility of having a Human Relations I class in the Fall. A needs assessment had not yet been completed so it was decided it should become part of the class. The other writer agreed

to serve as the instructor and the class had its beginning. Forty-nine participants were registered. The majority of the participants lived and worked within a community of 1,500 located within 100 miles of the MSC campus. Twenty-five participants were elementary teachers; nineteen were secondary teachers; and four worked in special education. In years of experience the participants ranged from one to 25 years and in age from the early twenties to over sixty. Data was collected through the use of two instruments: (1) the Rokeach Scale of Dogmatism[1] and (2) a twenty-item questionnaire.[2] The Rokeach test was administered as a pre- and post-test. The questionnaire was given to participants during the final meeting.

On the Rokeach test participants are asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each question. Responses range from +1, I disagree very much to +7, I agree very much. The lower the mean scale the more flexible the person.

The Rokeach test includes forty items. These items were reviewed for face validity and eleven were selected using the criteria that they would indicate the participant's attitudes toward (1) minority groups and (2) intergroup relations. These eleven items were compared via pre- and post-test. Group mean responses were computed along with the difference between pre- and post-test means. The group means as well as differences between means are reported.

Items on the questionnaire were tallied and reported. Six questions on the instrument are of the open-ended variety. These questions were

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[1]Dogmatism Scale, Form E, from The Open and Closed Mind by Milton Rokeach, 1960, by Basic Books, Inc., N. Y.

[2]Developed by Professor B. Kranz at Moorhead State College.

reviewed by the authors working independently. Trends were identified and then combined for reporting.

An N of 49 was used in this report. Although small for statistical purposes, this N was considered satisfactory in indicating general trends. As a date pool accumulates more sophisticated statistical analyses can be undertaken.

Findings

The experience was divided into 10 sessions of approximately three hours each. Session one was used for registration and the last session for evaluation. The remaining eight sessions were divided as follows:

Session	Topic
2	Afro-Americans
3	Mexican-Americans
4	Native American Indians
5	Women
6	Welfare and the Poor
7	Communication Skills
8	Simulation and Role-Playing
9	Minority Groups in General

Questionnaire

In evaluating the topics used in the experience, 33 participants stated the topics were very appropriate to their needs, 15 said they were fairly appropriate, and none suggested they were inappropriate.

All of the participants reported visitations by minority group members were a particularly important part of the experience and should be continued.

Thirty-one participants felt role-playing and simulation games[1] were helpful for understanding other people's feelings. Twelve felt these

[1]Simulation games used in the class were Ghetto, Black and White, and Men and Women.

experiences were interesting but not helpful. The balance said these experiences were either a waste of time or did not respond.

Thirty-eight participants reported those enrolled in the experience seemed to listen to one another's opinions. Eight felt other participants seemed too opinionated.

Participants were asked if their knowledge about various minority groups had improved or remained the same as a result of the experience. They responded as follows:

Group	Response			
	About the Same		Improved	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Afro-Americans	15	30	34	70
Native-American Indians	14	28	34	68
Mexican-Americans	3	6	46	92
Welfare and the Poor	18	36	30	60
Women	30	60	19	38
Senior Citizens or the Aged	39	78	9	18
Minorities in Textbooks	12	24	36	72
Young People	31	62	18	36

Participants were asked to indicate if the experience had changed their attitudes towards various topics. They responded:

Group	Response			
	About the Same		More Sensitive	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Afro-Americans	11	22	37	74
Native-American Indians	12	24	36	72
Mexican-Americans	1	2	48	96
Welfare and the Poor	24	48	23	46
Women	31	62	16	32
Senior Citizens or the Aged	33	66	15	30
Minorities in Textbooks	10	20	38	76
Young People	30	60	18	36

When asked if this experience had made them more sensitive to their colleagues, the participants responded:

Response	Number	Percent
A great deal more sensitive	21	42
Somewhat more sensitive	25	50
Nor much more sensitive	3	6

When asked to respond in the same way about their students, they reported:

Response	Number	Percent
A great deal more sensitive	23	46
Somewhat more sensitive	17	34
Not much more sensitive	7	14

Questions 1-3 were tabulated in the same way. Following the question the responses of the participants are reported according to session topic. Included within the first set of parenthesis following the session topic are the number of participants identifying that session. The second set of parenthesis includes the reasons they indicated that particular session. The reasons for selection are grouped into the table below. An example would be question 1, where the session dealing with Native-American Indians was selected by 24 participants as being most different from what they had expected. The reason 24 participants selected this session were reasons 1 and 2. Thus, the session is listed as (24) (1,2).

Reasons for Selection

1. participant had previous knowledge which proved to be inaccurate.
2. guests were more militant and hostile than had been anticipated.
3. participant wanted to learn more as a result of the session.
4. participant had previously lived within or worked within close contact with members of this minority group.
5. various media had provided participant with learning and awareness.

6. participant had a close relationship with a member of this minority group.

7. participant had done some reading and wanted to help.

8. participant felt he was not very well informed, had not read anything previous to the session.

9. participant felt this particular topic was relevant to his needs and area.

Question 1: The session I found most different than I expected was about _____ because:

Session

Native-American Indian (24) (1,2)

Mexican-Americans (15) (1,3)

Women (2) (7)

Afro-Americans (2) (8,3)

Welfare and the Poor (2) (1,9)

Question 2: The session I found I already knew about was on _____ because:

Session

Afro-Americans (1) (3,4)

Native-American Indian (11) (4)

Mexican-Americans (9) (4,6)

Women (6) (3,7)

All of the sessions (6) (3,8)

Question 3: The session I was most stimulated by and will read more about was on _____ because:

Session

Native-American Indians (20) (1,7,9)

Mexican-Americans (12) (1)

Afro-Americans (4), (1)

Women (5) (7)

All the Sessions (6) (3,8)

Question 4: Participants were asked to make any comments they felt indicated a way they had changed their behavior as a result of this experience. Numerous comments were made and the authors selected five that represented a cross-section. They were:

"Not tell Polish jokes any more."

"No longer teach Indian units using the stereotyped 'Naked Savage' with a headband and skin clothes.

"Respect peoples' values that are different than my own."

"Judge a person as a person, not as a member of a race."

"Try to listen to others better."

Rokeach Test

Questions 3, 4, 19, 22, 25, 28, 30, 35, 36, 39, and 40 were selected from the Rokeach Test. These questions seemed to have the greatest face validity as related to the four competencies stated in the state Human Relations requirement.

Means and differences between pre- and post-test means for each question are reported in the following table:

Rokeach Test Results

Question	3	4	19	22	25	28	30	35	36	39	40	Total
Pre-Test Mean	3.71	5.32	3.00	1.76	3.24	3.65	3.07	5.00	3.61	3.60	3.09	3.58
Post-Test Mean	3.26	5.07	2.43	1.74	2.52	3.70	2.26	4.76	3.39	3.63	2.67	3.22
Difference	.46	.26	.57	.02	.72	.04	.80	.24	.22	.33	.41	.36

Conclusions

Question 1 - What will be the effect of this experience on the attitudes of participants toward various racial, cultural, and economic groups in our society?

1. The respondents mean scores showed a change in the direction of increased flexibility on nine of the eleven questions selected from the Rokeach Test.

2. The respondents overall mean scores also showed a change toward increased flexibility.

3. With respect to the various groups studied, in five of the sessions over 50 percent of the respondents indicated their knowledge had improved as a result of the experience.

4. In four of the sessions over 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they were more sensitive to the various groups studied as a result of the experience.

Question 2 - Will the participants recognize and identify ways to deal with dehumanizing biases, discrimination, and prejudices?

1. Over 50 percent of the respondents identified at least one behavior they could change in themselves that would make them feel better about their own ability to deal with biases, discrimination, and prejudices.

2. Ninety-two percent of the respondents indicated they were more sensitive to their colleagues as a result of this experience.

3. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated they were more sensitive to their students as a result of this experience.

Question 3 - Which of the various learning experiences included in the class will produce positive reactions in the participants?

1. All of the respondents indicated minority group visitations were an essential part of the experience and should be continued.

2. Those sessions that were relevent to local problems were reacted to favorably by respondents.

3. Sixty-two percent of the respondents felt role-playing and simulation games were helpful.